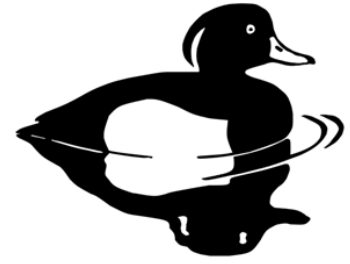


# BOC Newsletter

Spring 2015

No 66



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## Introduction

The Club’s winter indoor meeting programme is nearing its end, but don’t forget Ray Reedman’s workshop on April 15<sup>th</sup> entitled “Shades of Grey” – probably not to be confused with the salacious best seller of a similar name, but who knows what Ray has in store? Perhaps BDSM stands for Birds Don’t Stay Motionless or, Birdwatching Drives Some Mad or, maybe, Birdwatchers Develop Strange Mannerisms ? Feel free to make your own suggestions – a free edition of the next newsletter for the best effort ☺ And shame on you if you didn’t have to use Google to find out what BDSM usually stands for!

Also don’t forget that the outdoor calendar of trips will continue through the spring and summer - mid-week walks, day trips by car, weekends away and coach trips are all on the list (see item later in this newsletter for a reminder of upcoming trips etc). And the ever popular annual coach trip to the Birdfair at Rutland will be on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August – please contact Ray Reedman to book your seat. As always, please contact the named leaders in advance to check that the trip is going on as planned and whether there are any changes to the published arrangements. But wherever you go and whoever you go with, can I wish everyone a great spring and summer of birding. My annual birdwatching trip this year will be a spring week in Estonia - a new country for us and one that promises much.

Please get any items for the next newsletter to me by the end of May, as I hope to get the next edition out in June.

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Many thanks go to all contributors to this newsletter. Illustrations courtesy of Kingfisher Publications plc.

## BOC Photographic Competition – March 4th 2015

The annual Club Photographic Competition continues to go from strength to strength. The standard of entries this year was excellent, making life even harder for our judges (Dickie Duckett and Paul Keene) who, before the evening, had already spent time eliminating a number of very good entries, to make the number of entries on the evening more manageable. Despite this, the judges still had some 80 pictures to get through on the night which meant, as usual, that we were struggling to complete the proceedings before our end time of 10pm!

After the judges had looked at and discussed the entries they decided on a winner and runner-up in each category, and it was then down to the audience to vote for the picture that would be the overall winner and new holder of the Gordon Langsbury Trophy.

- In the Portrait category, the winner was Dave Rimes with his beautifully composed picture of a Dartford Warbler with John Walker's full-face image of an Eider Drake taking the runner-up prize.
- In the Action category, Bill Watts took the dramatic winning picture featuring an Eider Duck with its young heading out to sea, with Bill also taking the runner-up slot with his picture of a pair of Great Crested Grebes.
- In the Flight category, David Moran took the prize with his stunning image of a Red Kite in the rain, with joint runners-up Dave Rimes (Lesser Kestrel in flight) and Steven Day (Sand Martin flying over water).

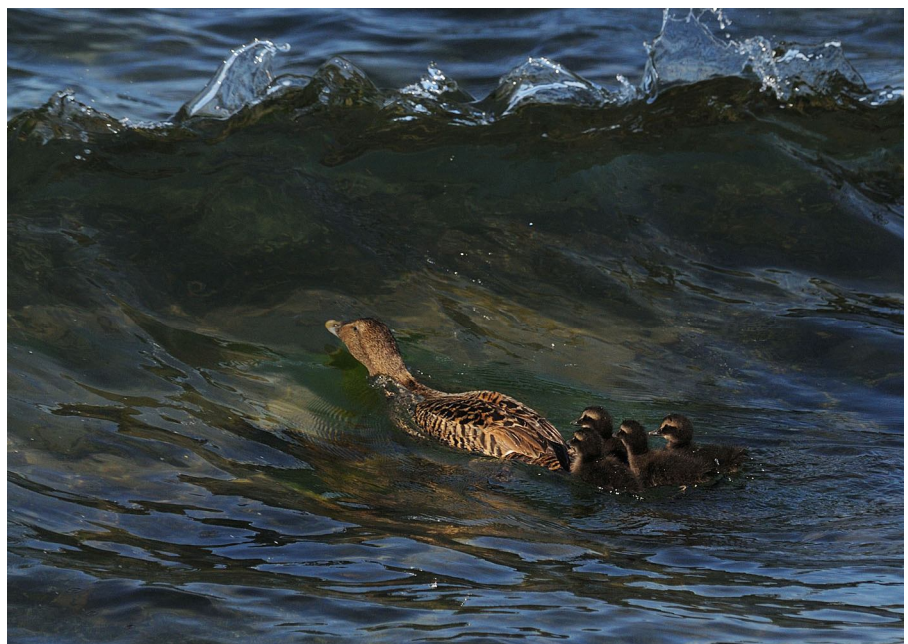
The 3 category winnings pictures are reproduced here to give an idea of their quality, although this method of reproduction hardly does them justice.

As with all such things it is, to a great extent, a matter of personal taste but it's worth saying that all three category winners had significant support from members of the audience, but in the end there was a clear winner with Bills Watts' picture of Eider Duck and Ducklings taking the trophy. I hope that Bill enjoys showing off the trophy to family and friends!

It was intended that all entries (including those eliminated before the evening) would, at least, be shown to the audience but, due to time restrictions and a degree of confusion, not all of the pictures were displayed - sorry about that! It is also worth adding that we did also suffer problems with the quality of the projection, which failed to do proper justice to pictures. We are in the process of looking into what can be done to improve both the event timing and the picture projection quality for next year.

Thanks to everyone for taking part, everyone who came along for the evening and a special vote of thanks to our judges.

Ted Rogers



Overall Winner  
Eider Duck and Ducklings  
By Bill Watts

## **Copies of “British Birds” looking for Good Home**

John Roberts has been given copies of British Birds from 1963 to 1971 with 2 missing from 1970, and complete copies from 1979 to 1996. If anyone would like some or all of these they should contact John at a meeting or on 0118 482137.

## **Committee Update**

The BOC Committee met on 15th January 2015 and discussed the following issues.

- The final accounts for 2013-14 and the terms of engagement for the independent examiner.
- Membership secretary's report and membership trends.
- Progress with the programme for 2014-15, which is coming together well.
- Conservation report, including identifying possible new local wildlife sites and the tree sparrow winter feeding project.
- Report from the Birds of Berkshire Editorial Board. The 2011 report was being printed and will be distributed in February and March. The 2012 report will be started soon. A new editor is required.
- Redeveloping the BOC website. The framework is complete and the next stage is to update the pages.
- The process for the review of the County Recorder and Berkshire Records Committee.
- The low turnout at the two meetings in December. The possibility of altering the format of the Christmas Social was raised, and will be discussed at the next committee meeting.
- Social media update.
- Selling the original artworks painted by Robert Gillmor for the Birds of Berkshire covers.
- How to put four high quality Basil Ede prints that have been donated to the best use.

The next meeting is on Thursday 26th March 2015.

Sally Wearing, Secretary

## **Vote for the New National Bird**

You may have heard about a campaign (fronted by David Lindo, the Urban Birder) for Britain to choose a new National Bird. Apparently the last time any vote was taken was in the mid 60s and the Robin was the chosen favourite - but will it retain its top spot? The vote coincides with the General Election (and arguably might be more fruitful?) and ends at midnight on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The original list has been whittled down to 10 birds, consisting of Barn Owl, Mute Swan, Blackbird, Puffin, Blue Tit, Red Kite, Hen Harrier, Robin, Kingfisher and Wren.

For more information and to register your vote go to [www.votenationalbird.com](http://www.votenationalbird.com)

## **Upcoming Trips and Excursions**

### **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

#### **Mid-week walk at Greenham Common**

At this season there is a strong chance of passage migrants, as well as some classic heath-land species.

Meet at the Control Tower car park off Burys Bank Rd (SU 499651)  
at 10 a.m.

Contact Renton Righelato on 0787 981 2564

### **Sunday 26th April 2015**

#### **Weekend day trip by car to Hurst Spit and Keyhaven**

Sea-watching for late divers and scoters, passage skuas, auks and gannets, newly-arrived terns etc. Then to the marshes to seek out waders and passerines.

Meet at 8.30 a.m. off the lay-by at lower end of New Lane, Milford on Sea (off Milford to Keyhaven Road) (SU299908)

Contact Chris Foster on 07779 302347

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**East Berks RSPB Coach trip to Portland Bill and Radipole**

Cost £20

Passage sea-birds; nesting auks and kittiwakes; possible ravens and peregrines; and incoming migrants – and that is just the morning. Add ducks, waders and more passerines in the afternoon.

Meet at 7 a.m. at the entrance to Braywick Park (Braywick Sports Ground), Braywick Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1DX (SU892798).

Book with Ernie Allen on 01628 625324

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**Mid-week walk at Thursley Common**

This unique site contains heath, bog, and woodland, and a variety of birds to match.

Meet at 10 a.m. in the Moat car park off Thursley Road, south of Elstead

(GU8 6LW) (SU 900416)

Contact Carole White on 01344 452058

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**Weekday trip by car to the New Forest**

Meet EITHER at Bolderwood Car Park (SU242086) at 7 a.m. for early morning woodland walk with the possibility of wood warbler, firecrest, hawfinch, crossbill, spotted flycatcher etc.

OR at 10.30 a.m. in the car park at Acres Down (SU268097) for a raptor watch, with goshawk and honey-buzzard possible.

Contact Ray Reedman on 0118 9864338

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**Weekend trip by car to North Wales.**

A chance to see birds we don't see in the south, including Chough, Puffin, and Black Guillemot. With breaks on the journeys there and back in search of Dippers and Pied Flycatchers. We will probably be based in Betws-y-Coed.

Contact Carole White (01344 452058) before end of December if interested.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**Evening mid-week walk on the Downs at Churn**

Typical Downland species – partridge, corn-bunting, yellowhammer and yellow wagtail, but also the chance of a rarity of two

Meet at 7.30 p.m. at the far end of Boham's Road (2 miles) at SU 510833 (turn left opposite garden centre on the A417 at the west end of Blewbury village)

Leader Adrian Brown. Contact Ray Reedman on 0118 9864338

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2015**

**BOC Coach to the British Bird-watching Fair, Rutland**

Cost (estimated) £35 incl. entrance fee

Talks, exhibitions and birding – the choice is yours when you visit the top event of its kind in Britain at the Egleton Nature Reserve. Always a wonderful day out.

Meet at 7.00 a.m. at Reading (Whiteknights Park main entrance, RG6 6UR)

Or at 7.30 a.m. at the entrance to Bray Wick Sports Club,

Braywick Road, SL6 1BN (SU891799)

Leave Rutland 5 p.m.

Book with Ray Reedman 0118 9864338

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

**Weekend trip by car to North Norfolk**

At this time of year North Norfolk has a huge variety of resident and passage birds, often very different from the February population. There is a strong chance of passage rarities

*Advance booking (by early August) is essential in order to secure good accommodation*

Contact Bill Nicoll by email [treasurer@berksoc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@berksoc.org.uk) (or 01344 455403)



## **BOC Evening Walk to the Berkshire Downs – June 2014**



On arrival at the meeting place I was pleasantly surprised to see 16 people already gathered waiting to set off on this evening walk on the Berkshire Downs, a walk which promised a number of farmland species, some quite rare and others, for the time being, fairly common, but nevertheless restricted to this downland habitat. We hadn't gone far when we looked across a valley to an arable field on the far side, and found in a weedy area a pair of Stone Curlews. Farmers in the area are encouraged to leave bare patches in their arable crops to attract Stone Curlews to breed, making it slightly easier to locate them, though by the time the chicks hatch, the weeds are well-grown and provide ample cover. Brown Hares and Woodpigeons were also attracted to this part of the field.

We continued our walk towards the ancient Ridgeway Path by a less direct route, and along the way had good views of Yellowhammers, Whitethroats, Linnets, Corn Buntings and a Muntjac in the hedgerows. At the Ridgeway, we inspected another bare field where a Grey Partridge melted into the background and would have been invisible but for the jet black crescent on its belly. Another sharp-eyed observer pointed out a distant Barn Owl, hunting three fields away and a Red-legged Partridge perched uncharacteristically on top of a farm building. We continued along the Ridgeway a short distance to a point where we had a good vantage out to the west, and listened for calling birds. We had hoped to hear Quail calling but it was not to be – just an overhead Grey Heron and Ray Reedman's hearing aid.

So we retraced our steps a short way along the Ridgeway and checked out the bare strip in the failing light. An unusual movement at the edge of the crop alerted Andy T's attention and we were treated to the sight of a Badger and two cubs ambling away along the field edge. Nearby a Buzzard perched on a fence post, then as we were about to leave, an owl flew over the Ridgeway just by us. Was it white or brown? After a minute staring into the gloom, by which time it had been joined by another, we realised we were watching a pair of Barn Owls. A good note to end on!

Robert Godden

### **Martin Sell**

You may know that Martin's family asked that any donations in his memory be sent to BBOWT in support of their barn owl appeal. I told BBOWT of this and had a prompt response from the Chief Executive, Estelle Bailey, expressing their thanks and acknowledging the work Martin had done for BBOWT. He was described as an extraordinary supporter who after 50 years of volunteering had been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014.

His fund raising efforts within the Mid Berks Regional Group had raised £12,000 in the last 10 years and he led countless walks and workparties. Many will know you did not come home early from Martin's walks. His contribution to BBOWT is described as "invaluable, and we will forever be indebted to him." He would have been proud of that acknowledgement.

John Roberts

**Solution to Crossword in Newsletter 65**

S	C	A	U	P	I	C	E	D
H	O	V	E	R	F	L	Y	A
O	R	I	O	L	E	A	E	W
V	M	A	R	G	I	N	S	L
E	O	N	A	A	G	G	T	I
L	R	T	V	R	N	U	R	S
E	A	R	E	D	F	L	I	T
R	N	E	N	E	G	A	P	E
S	T	E	R	N	A	P	E	N

Editor's Note: For those of you who enjoyed this crossword I hope to have another in the next issue